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ABSTRACT

The Off-Reservation Boarding School (ORBS) Project, financed by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, is described in this document, which was presented to participants at an ORBS Project workshop. The project was devised as a vehicle for supplying the answers to the following unanswered questions concerning Indian education: Should ORBS continue to serve the needs of Indian youngsters? If so, what kinds of schools should and can they be? Should some of them have special purposes? What types of students should be enrolled? And most important, how does the entire subject of ORBS relate to the policy of self-determination? The general objectives for the ORBS Project are to review and develop long-range goals, identify and describe the existing program, and provide recommendations for meeting the agreed-upon long-range goals and objectives. Area offices, the school board, the evaluator and chairman, the budget, peripheral dormitories, consultants, report reproduction, timing, and steps to ORBS are topics listed under the section on ORBS procedures, which describes how ORBS works. Summaries of the ORBS program categories, by which each ORBS is to be analyzed, such as the goals and philosophy, the school plant, the curriculum or instructional program, the out-of-class activities, administration, evaluation, admission practices, plant management, public and human relations, and health services are also included. (HBC)

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OFF-RESERVATION BOARDING SCHOOL PROJECT

(ORBS PROJECT)

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JAN 19 19
NRSU
E.R.I.C.

Louis R. Bruce, Commissioner

James E. Hawkins, Director
Office of Education Programs
Washington, D. C. 20242

William J. Benham, Director
Field Services
Albuquerque, New Mexico

Thomas R. Hopkins, Chief
Division of Evaluation and Program Review

Bureau of Indian Affairs
Office of Education Programs
Field Services
Division of Evaluation and Program Review
P. O. Box 1788
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87103

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F O R E W A R D

Over the years, indeed, over the decades which Indian education spans, boarding schools have had a major role and their fair share of criticism. In recent years they have again assumed the spotlight and when appointed Director of Education Programs for the Bureau of Indian Affairs in early 1971, they were at what I termed a "crossroads". This meant essentially that there were more questions than there were answers. To make a long story short, the Off-Reservation Boarding School Project was devised as a vehicle for supplying the answers to the questions.

Having raised the issue and having dealt with it for the past several months, it would perhaps be instructive to share with you some of the questions that have been asked and continued to be asked concerning off-reservation boarding schools. First, should they continue to serve the needs of Indian youngsters? If so, what kinds of schools should and can they be? Should some of them have special purposes? What types of students should be enrolled? And most important, how does the entire subject of off-reservation boarding schools relate to the policy of self-determination? These are just a sample of the many questions for which there are few valid answers. Hopefully, the ORBS Project will supply the knowledge that will help resolve the general issue of the future as well as other concerns of the off-reservation boarding schools.

It is with considerable forethought that the present ORBS workshop has been called as its content and teachings comprise a year of experimental work all ultimately aimed at improving services to Indian youth who attend off-reservation boarding schools. You are encouraged to look over closely the entire project, to discuss it with your fellow school board members, fellow educators who run the schools, and with the students themselves. The ORBS activity is designed to be helpful to your school and it is important that each of you see this as a basic part of it. It is also important that the local people (School board, staff, students, and Area Office personnel) sincerely desire to participate as without this basic commitment, little can be accomplished in the long run.

My charge to each of you is to get the most out of the ORBS workshop, take the message home to the local people, and when the time comes early this fall to consider the ORBS activity and your participation in it, give it your sincere support for it is with profound seriousness that it was designed and is provided for you.

James E. Hawkins, Director
Office of Education Programs

ORBS PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The general objectives for the ORBS Project for each school are to:

(1) Review and develop long-range goals.

(2) Identify and describe the existing program.

(3) Provide recommendations for meeting the agreed-upon long-range goals and objectives. These recommendations will be stated in realistic alternatives and priorities.

I N T R O D U C T I O N

At this point, the reader has the benefit of the Foreword by Director of Education Programs, James E. Hawkins, and the general objectives for the ORBS Project. It is now appropriate to describe what has taken place to date relative to the ORBS Project.

It was determined about a year ago that the best approach to an overall survey of all ORBS was to employ a "pilot" approach and experiment with methods of going about achieving the overall ORBS objectives. Two schools were used in the pilot projects: (1) Sherman Institute at Riverside, California, and (2) Chilocco Indian School at Chilocco, Oklahoma. Two similar, but nonetheless different activities were developed and carried out. At Sherman, the entire activity was contracted to the National Indian Training and Research Center (NITRIC) at Tempe, Arizona, under the leadership of Mr. Francis McKinley. The Chilocco Survey was conducted with primary control of most activities vested in personnel of the Education function of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Chilocco did employ outside consultants, but most of the work was performed by BIA personnel from all levels of operation. The content and methodology used in both of these projects was presented and further refined in a one-week workshop in Albuquerque in June. The workshop you are now attending is a blending of the two pilot projects that was largely worked out in the June ORBS activity.

With this in mind, it is appropriate to present a more detailed list of the objectives for this workshop:

JULY WORKSHOP ACTIVITIES

At this workshop, the participants should learn:

(1) The general concept of ORBS.

(2) How a school may become a participant in the ORBS Project.

(3) A general understanding of the methodology to be used during the ORBS activity at the school.

(4) The general objectives of ORBS as well as the special objectives of each program category.

(5) The organizational structure of ORBS leading to an understanding of the role and responsibility of the various participants in the ORBS activity.

(6) How the products of the ORBS Project can be of use to the schools regarding their respective futures.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE ORBS PROJECT

By now, one can begin to get an idea of what the ORBS Project is all about. The Foreword and Introduction with the Project Objectives provide basic content relative to the direction it will take. It remains now to provide a more detailed framework with more discussion of its content.

The June planning conference decided that ORBS should have ten (10) program categories: These ten are:

(1) The Goals and/or Philosophy

(2) School Plant (Facilities)

(3) Curriculum (Instructional Program)

(4) Out-Of-Class Activities

(5) Administration

(6) Evaluation

(7) Admission Practices

(8) Plan Management

(9) Public and Human Relations

(10) Health Services

Each ORBS is to be analyzed using these ten program categories as the basic parts of the school.

It was further decided that a team of individuals should be made responsible for the ORBS activity at each school. The ORBS Team would be composed of the following types of individuals:

Evaluator and Chairman of the Team

Representative from the School Board

Representative from the School Staff

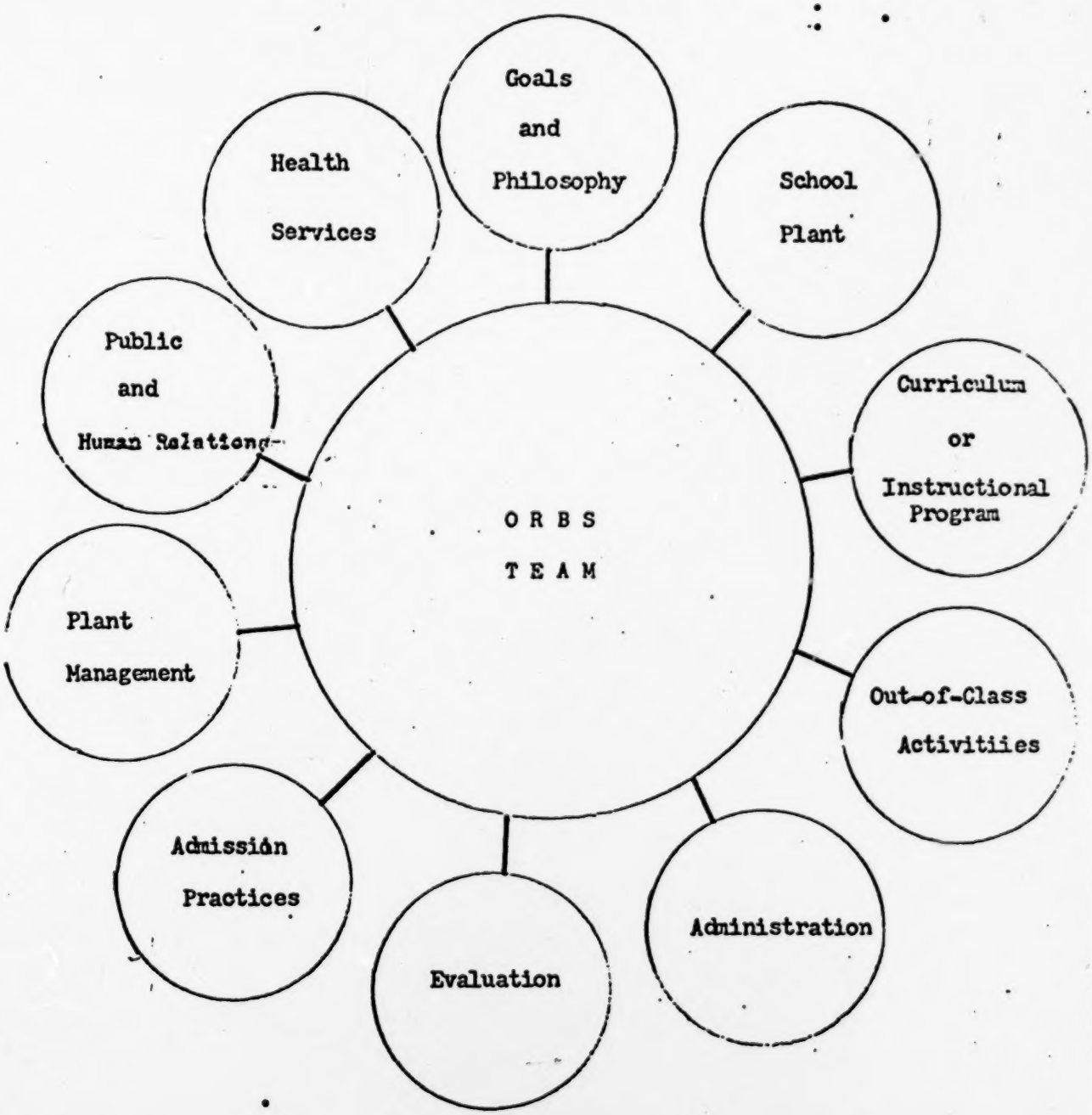
Representative from the Student Body

Representative from the Area Office

Figure One, given on the following page, is an illustration of the general concept of the ORBS Project.

It is pertinent to ask what the project can do for the school. First, the objectives give a general idea of what the results might be. Many of the ORBS have been in limbo for several years and their school plants need refrubershing or rebuilding. ORBS can assist in the decision relative to the long-range goals of the school as it is these that basically determine program directions. Some of the schools are newer and need to look at themselves in order to get fresh direction, to see how well they have done thus far, to modify and to refocus. ORBS can tell the school board, staff and students how well some parts of their program are functioning as well as strengths and weaknesses. It should be remembered that ORBS can provide a mechanism for the Area Office, staff, students, or school board to take a look at some part of the school that has been bugging them for some time, ask what and how well that part of the school is getting along, and plot new directions relative thereto. In summary, the ORBS Project, while providing information about the general objectives given in the Introduction, can also do other things for the school. In this instance, these other things can be specified by local people.

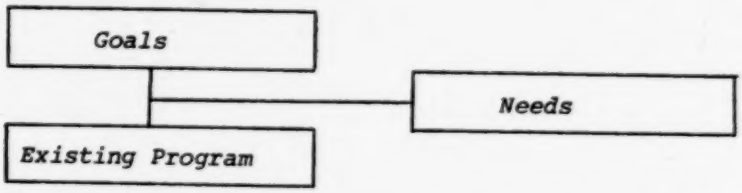
FIGURE ONE



ORBS CONCEPT

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

An important product of the ORBS activity will be a general assessment of the needs of the school. There is a general formula for assessing needs that looks like the following:



It should be noted that this same formula can be used throughout the entire school program until needs are assessed at the classroom level of operation.

As of this writing, the professional staff of Field Services of the Office of Education Programs is working on a general format that will make it possible to enter basic ORBS information in a computer for storage for future use. Therefore, another product will be baseline data on each school that will be available to local people, BIA officials and even the Congress that can be used for purposes of decision-making. Too, such an approach lends itself for use in future projects that would provide a growth factor. That is, the baseline data gathered in the School Year 1972-1973 could be used for comparative purposes if the school were looked at again at a later date.

It is important to understand that the product of ORBS will be reliable information to decision-makers. That is, the ORBS Project is a type of

evaluation that provides reliable information to students, parents, school board members, and BIA personnel, all of whom are decision-makers of one type or another. The decision-makers are then to use the information from ORBS to make each school a better one. In other words, the products of ORBS Project can be used with authority as a basis for program developments. More will be said in the section on Procedures that will further describe how ORBS works.

ORBS PROCEDURES

The procedures for ORBS are as follows:

Central Office: The Central Office of the Bureau of Indian Affairs has assigned the ORBS Project to the Division of Evaluation and Program Review. This Division has overall responsibility which includes design and analysis, coordination between Areas, technical assistance and producing a final report based on all ORBS. The "Evaluator and Chairman" of ORBS will be either from the Division of Evaluation, another Central Office Division, or from another BIA Education Office. The Evaluation Division is currently working toward providing computer assistance and will likewise make this service a part of ORBS.

Area Offices: Area Offices are asked to provide coordination between schools within their Area, to assign a member of their staff to the ORBS Team, and to serve as the liaison between the Central Office and the schools, especially at the early stages when the schools are deciding about participation and during the later stages when the report is nearing completion. Central Office personnel will work through Area Offices relative to ORBS. Area Offices should appoint one individual of their staff to be ORBS liaison with the Division of Evaluation.

School Superintendent: The ORBS Project is designed to work cooperatively with the school administration, which is a point that should be kept in mind. The School Superintendent may, if he chooses, serve as the ORBS Team Member or he may select someone from his staff for this purpose.

The Superintendent is to formalize a request to the School Board concerning participation in the ORBS activity. Action of the School Board regarding ORBS should be communicated to the Area Office so they can perform the coordination and scheduling of ORBS schools within their jurisdiction. The ORBS Chairman is to work closely with and coordinate all project activities with the Superintendent. The Superintendent should be kept fully informed at all times concerning ORBS. The school should provide a meeting room for the Team.

School Board: The ORBS activity will take place at a school only after the school board considers it and decides whether or not they wish the school to participate. The Superintendent of the school will take the subject of participation to the board. ORBS has been so designed that the final report will be given to the Board and the Superintendent in a joint meeting. ORBS considers the Board a part of the school administration, the policy-setting body, and intends to carry out all activities accordingly. School Boards should remember that they may include items in the ORBS activity that are not a part of the basic project data.

ORBS Team: Figure One shows that the ORBS Team is the heart of the entire project. The Team is considered a user of information. Its most important responsibility is reviewing the reports from the program areas and developing them into a summary analysis of the school. It is not intended that the Team develop information by observing classes, looking through files, etc. Rather, they consider seriously the reports

prepared by Specialists in the various ORBS Program areas.

Evaluator and Chairman: This individual will assume responsibility for the entire ORBS activity at a school. They will work closely with the school administration and keep all parties involved (school administration, Area Office, Central Office), fully informed. The Chairman will be chosen jointly by the school administration, the Area Office, and the Division of Evaluation. After School Board approval, the first action taken will be the selection of this individual for the ORBS activity at the school. The Chairman, then, is a key individual to the success of the project as they will have the job of coordination, Team leadership, writing the summary report and putting the entire report together.

Followup: Perhaps the most important of all will be the followup. Work is starting now on this activity as without it, the ORBS report becomes little more than empty rhetoric. It should be known that followup on Sherman and Chilocco is underway.

Budget: The Chairman of the Team and the school administration should prepare a budget for the project as soon as possible and submit it to the Division of Evaluation through the Area Office. ORBS should not cost a school or the Area Office. Details relative to the handling of budget matters will be provided to the Areas and schools in a separate memorandum. In other words, the ORBS activity is not designed to be a financial burden on a school and has been arranged in a favorable cost-effectiveness format.

Elementary Off-Reservation Boarding Schools: Yes, Elementary ORBS will be included in the project.

Peripheral Dormitories: Peripheral dorms have not been included in the project. However, should an Area wish to include them, the ORBS Project will provide as much technical assistance as possible. Due to a very meager budget for ORBS, the money needs for peripheral dorms cannot be supplied by ORBS and will have to come from Area or school resources. Should this situation change, Areas will be notified immediately.

Consultants: It is anticipated that Specialists (consultants) will be used in each of the program categories. These may come from within the BIA or outside of it. Selection of consultants should be done jointly between the administration and the ORBS Team Chairman. Experience has shown that a Specialist in a field is better prepared to provide the technical services needed for each of the program categories. That is, a consultant will prepare a report in each program category which in turn will be submitted to the ORBS Team. The ORBS summary will be a synthesis of the total program based on the seperate consultant reports. It should be noted that experience has shown that Specialists unfamiliar with Indian education are usually unsuited to the ORBS activity. ORBS is a short term need and would only serve to educate the inexperienced Specialists rather than provide a service to the school.

Technical Report Forms: Technical Report Forms are being prepared by BIA Central Office staff that will comprise a basic ORBS program for

the computer. The basic information called for in these report forms cannot be altered. However, if a school or Area wishes to add to them, they may do so. Several of the forms will be discussed with you at the workshop. A close look at them will give one an excellent idea of the types of information sought. Report forms serve as the basic ingredient for the computer program and ORBS Project.

Report Reproduction: Reproduction of the final ORBS Report should be handled locally. If this cannot be done at the local level, the Chairman should contact the Evaluation Division for assistance.

Reporting ORBS: The final written report should be given first to a joint meeting of the school administration and the school board. It is suggested that this be made at a board meeting with at least the Chairman of the ORBS Team present for an oral report. Then, it should be transmitted to the Evaluation Division.

Timing: Timing of the ORBS activity at a school is very important. It should not be disruptive to the normal routine of the school and should relate comfortably with it. It should come at a time of the year that is not unsettled or extraordinary, such as the last few days or the beginning days of schools or immediately preceding a holiday(s). The ORBS activity at a school can take place at most any time during the year, Fall, Winter or Spring. It is suggested that an Area have only one ORBS going on at a time. Hopefully, each ORBS activity can be started and carried through to completion within a sixty-day period

or a ninety-day period at a maximum. Requests to school boards and their decisions relative to ORBS should be completed by September one or as close as possible thereto.

Accreditation and Other Reports: ORBS should not duplicate other types of activities or evaluation that have been recently conducted at a school. Certainly, the findings of people involved in reporting on a school should be used and incorporated into the background information of the total activity. Previous reports, such as accreditation reviews should be used to guide the Team in developing a type of activity that would be useful but different. Developing background on the school is the first order of business for the ORBS Team and it is at this time that the school administration can bring previous evaluation reports to bear on the situation.

Steps to ORBS: The following steps show in summary form the ORBS activity at a school:

(1) School Superintendent takes ORBS Project to School Board.

(2) School Board considers the ORBS activity and passes decision back to the Superintendent who notifies the Area Office of their decision.

(3) Area notifies Evaluation Division of all schools to be included in ORBS.

(4) Area, in consultation with school administration, and Evaluation Division determines scheduling of ORBS activity at school.

(5) Chairman of ORBS Team is determined.

(6) Chairman, in cooperation with local officials, selects other team members and calls first meeting.

(7) Chairman and Team organizes ORBS for the school and informs interested parties.

(8) Chairman, in cooperation with school administration and Area Office, prepares budget for the activity.

(9) ORBS activity is carried out at the school.

(10) ORBS final report is prepared and presented to the School Board, School Superintendent and Area Office.

(11) Final report is forwarded to Evaluation Division to become part of the overall project data.

ORBS PROGRAM CATEGORIES

There are establised conventions regarding the analysis of a school that in some measure are followed in the ORBS Project. However, experience with the pilot projects led the planning group of ORBS to develop some of their own. It should be quickly pointed out that ORBS program categories are not an attempt to "re-discover the wheel" when it comes to the analysis of a school. Rather, it is a restructuring. This means that conventional methods of analysis and evaluation will fit or relate to the ORBS categories with some or no modification. ORBS categories are directly related to the resident aspect of off-reservation boarding schools. Conventional methods of analysis do not ordinarily include the dormitory aspect of ORBS, hence, a different approach was developed. Also, the fact that all ORBS are Federal Institutions meant another unique feature. With this brief introduction, let us go on to the program categories and a summary description of each.

Goals and Philosophy: This is a conventional category of any school analysis or evaluation. ORBS hopes to review existing ones and to provide a mechanism which includes dropping some and adding others. It is intended that Indian communities will participate in setting new long-range goals for the schools. Educational goals are:

> The activities of human adults in modern society. Goals are thought to be basic global guidelines educators take and use to develop specific instructional objectives. Goals are not permanent, but provide basic direction to a school program.

School Plant: This refers to the school buildings, all of them, including outhouses. The Division of School Facilities, located in

Albuquerque of the Bureau of Indian Affairs has been very instrumental in developing this aspect of ORBS. ORBS hopes to provide a review of the quality of existing structures and an assessment of need, based on the review of the goals and other parts of the program.

Curriculum or Instructional Program: This is the part of the school that is evaluated most frequently and about which the most is usually said. It includes the course of study or courses offered and the staff to teach them. It is the conventional part of a school program. There may be a considerable data available at the school on this program category. If so, its findings should become a part of ORBS and some other curriculum activity, one that is needed, should be devised by the ORBS Team.

Out-of-Class Activities: This is a broad and comprehensive aspect of the ORBS activity and includes guidance and counseling, dormitory operations, the dietary program of the students, recreation and host of other related programs. The Division of Student Services of the BIA, located in Albuquerque, has been working on development of this aspect of ORBS. It should be noted that is is in this area that ORBS will place much emphasis as it is a unique aspect of the resident school. Also, the pilot projects indicated that out-of-class activities of an ORBS were of much concern to parents.

Administration: This refers to the way the entire school is put together as one single operation. It also includes the school board and its

activities. It is more conventional regarding method of analysis but has aspects unique to the resident aspect of an ORBS. Administration includes the Superintendent, all supervisory staff and the method they employ to run the school. In the ORBS Project, the School Board is conceived of as a policy setting body and the Superintendent as the individual who carries out policy.

Evaluation: This refers to the schools method of assessing progress, be it carrying out overall school goals and objectives or measuring student learning. For BIA Education, Evaluation is defined as:

> The process of ascertaining the decision areas of concern, selecting appropriate information, and collecting and analyzing information in order to report summary data useful to decision-makers in selecting among alternatives. (Marvin Alkin, "Evaluation Theory Development", Evaluation Comment, Vol. 2, No. 1 (October, 1969) P. 2).

In a sense, the entire ORBS Project is an evaluation activity. However, as a program category, it looks to see what type of evaluation system is used by the school and makes recommendations for improvement.

It should be pointed out that each program category will provide a report that contains suggestions or recommendations to be used in improving the school.

Admission Practices: Although this is a part of the administration category, it was deemed by the planning group of such importance that it should stand alone. It refers to the types of students who attend an ORBS as well as to the types of students who should attend an ORBS.

Admission practices and the review of them are an important aspect of the ORBS Project.

Plant Management: Plant Management is unique to the BIA and normally is a part of School Facilities. However, Plant Management is not a part of the Education function of the BIA and is placed elsewhere in the administrative structure. It is not the intent of ORBS to provide a qualitative evaluation of Plant Management as this will have to be done by someone other than Education. It is the intent of ORBS to invite the participation of Plant Management in the activity and where possible, relate education activities to it.

Public and Human Relations: This is usually a part of the administration, but like the category of admission practices, was thought important enough to stand alone. Placing it by itself means that it is of great importance to the school. This category refers to the way human and public relations are handled at a school. It was also of great importance to parents in the pilot projects.

Health Services: Like Plant Management, Health Services are not a primary responsibility of Education personnel. However, they are an important aspect of the operation of any ORBS and nonetheless are of great concern and consume the energies of Education personnel. It will be handled cooperatively with the Division of Indian Health of the Public Health Service, when this is appropriate. There is also a part of the total school program to which it relates that is entirely outside of the

responsibilities of USPHS. The Division of Student Services has been developing this aspect of ORBS.

It has been mentioned earlier in this the description of the ORBS Project that there will be a technical specialist handling each program category at each school and that this person will prepare a report to be given to the ORBS Team. The report will be used as basic data for the analysis of the school. It should also be noted that basic report forms are being developed in many of the program categories. While the basic data of a program category cannot be modified, a school can add to it.

It is hoped that the above material does in some small way begin to describe an activity which you feel will be helpful to your school(s). You are encouraged to ask questions and to consider, with great seriousness, the possibility of participating in ORBS. The Office of Education Programs has attempted to design a program that will help your school through the crossroads in which it is believed to be. The ORBS Project can be of benefit, provided it has the support of local people. Your support is solicited.